



# Ironhorse Desert News

## Operation Iraqi Freedom



28 July 2003

*“Steadfast & Loyal”*

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*Photo by SPC Rhea Aderegg*

SMA Jack Tilley visits with Task Force Ironhorse soldiers during a recent visit to Iraq.



Working up an appetite before lunch with soldiers at the DSE, SMA Tilley took on a soldier who challenged him to a bout of one-armed pushups.



SMA Tilley checked out some of the equipment at Soldiers' Inn.

*By MSG Debra Bingham*

TIKRIT, Iraq--SMA Jack Tilley visited with soldiers of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and Task Force Ironhorse in Tikrit, Iraq, on July 22. Tilley met with MG Raymond Odierno, Commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> ID, and the task force's senior enlisted leaders. After receiving an operational overview, Tilley took time to address soldier issues.

Tilley spoke about getting the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) back on track in the midst of recent deployments. He discussed an option of conducting a compressed version of the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) to deal with the backlog of soldiers requiring the course. For a one-year period, beginning in January 04, PLDC will run for 15 consecutive days and offer the same curriculum as the present 30-day course.

"We are going to crank-up our education system because we can't afford to let it lie for a couple of years," he said. The Sergeants Major Academy was shortened from 9 to 6 months this year to accommodate deployed soldiers, according to Tilley.

Plans are also underway to begin returning soldiers for the Basic and Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Courses within the next few months. Tilley feels getting soldiers to NCOES is as important to morale as it is to promotions.

"We're going to start sending people back to school. People who have been deployed, we're going to put their names back on ATARS (Army Training and Resource System) and we're going to work with the divisions and corps and just start sending them back," Tilley said.

Tilley also spoke about keeping soldiers motivated despite the high operational tempo. Currently the Army has 370,000 soldiers deployed in 120 different locations, according to Tilley. He said the senior leadership is looking at that to see exactly what can be done to "slow down the pace of the Army."

The rapid deployment pace could have an impact on retention, something Tilley hopes to avoid. "I've heard comments that we're a 10-division Army with a 12-division mission," Tilley said. "So we are looking at that now to see what kind of adjustments we need to make."

# Task Force News

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He advised leaders to be honest with soldiers about what lies ahead and continually work on improving quality of life issues. "Be honest and straightforward with them and I think they understand that. You need to talk to soldiers a lot more."

Tilley got a chance to see how 4<sup>th</sup> ID is taking care of its soldiers when he paid a visit to Soldiers' Inn, a rest and relaxation site located in one of Saddam Hussein's former palaces in Tikrit. CSM Charles Fuss, 4<sup>th</sup> ID's CSM, spearheaded efforts to get the facility up and running. He said Tilley was impressed by the facility.

"He thought the place was great. The SMA even played a game of pool with a soldier—and beat him," Fuss said.

Tilley had lunch with soldiers on Forward Operating Base Speicher, before boarding a helicopter to visit task force soldiers and assess conditions in outlying areas. He was encouraged by what he saw during his visit, but is convinced the quality of life will improve with time.

"Will we have a Burger King or a MacDonald's here? I don't know, but I think we will have to continue to improve the living conditions for soldiers—and we will."



By MSG Dave Johnson

TIKRIT, Iraq -- The 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division has been operating in Iraq since mid-April. The Ivy Division has helped in rebuilding much of the infrastructure of Iraq. Schools and banks have reopened. Hospitals are functioning again and doctors are treating patients. Citizens are being paid their back salaries and merchants have organized bazaars to facilitate economic interchange with Americans.

Improvements to the quality of life for American soldiers are also being made. One key element in these improvements is the supply chain. Soldiers are active consumers of goods, be it food or other items, and the logisticians and transportation units keep the goods flowing.

Transportation units have been busy since they've been in Iraq. Life support and force protection were high priorities. Most of the supplies coming into the country were moved by trucks. Recently, goods began moving by rail.

Now another supply avenue is open, thanks to the 223<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Company, a National Guard unit from West Point, Miss. The engineers repaired a runway at North Tikrit Airfield so that it could re-open.

According to Air Force MAJ Todd Risk, fixed-wing planes can now be utilized for cargo. Risk is the Air Mobility Liaison Officer for the 4<sup>th</sup> ID.

"Air MEDEVAC capabilities are forthcoming, too," said Risk. "Air capabilities really help improve supply channels."

Supplies are moving into the 4<sup>th</sup> ID's area of operations through multiple means now. The increased availability of goods should lead to improvements in the standard of living for soldiers.

# Task Force News

By SGT Ryan Sills

TIKRIT, Iraq – After putting in a long day in the field there is nothing better than being served a tasty meal that provides an alternative to Meals-Ready-to-Eat. But along with hot meals comes the price of hard labor and time to make them.

That price is paid by soldiers who are responsible for preparing the food, and keeping the dining facility, housed in a towering palace with slick marble floors, clean.

The task of serving thousands of meals every day at Forward Operating Base Ironhorse falls to cooks from units within the taskforce.

While the cooks' focus on preparing the food, the less glamorous duties are reserved for the Kitchen Police, or KPs.

The KPs are usually junior enlisted soldiers who help the cooks. At FOB Ironhorse, there are ten KPs on duty per day. They put in long hours and deal with incredible heat so that their fellow soldiers can have a good meal.

The KP duty day is broken up into two shifts. The breakfast shift runs from 3:00-11:00 a.m., and the dinner shift lasts from 1:00-9:00 p.m.

One KP worker, PFC Randall Jennings, A Company, 16<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion, says the cooks treat the KP staff fairly. He went on to say "it's not that hard it's just the stuff nobody wants to do."

Some KPs are tasked with scrubbing pots and pans in a small tent that attracts lots of flies. Others serve hot meals from steaming cookers to thousands of soldiers passing through the chow line. Another group of KPs contend with the mountain of trash by continually bagging it up lugging it to the trash point to keep the area clean.

The KPs get a 2 hour break after the morning meal, before they start the process again.

KP shift leader SSG Brenda Kearney, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 124<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion, said KP personnel help out a lot and play an important part in completing the mission.

"They're a big, big help. If it weren't for them we'd be running around like chickens with our heads cut off," said PFC Christopher Semiramis, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Despite the difficulty of their job Semiramis says it's worthwhile. "It puts a smile on the soldier's faces when we have good meals."



Photos by SSG Craig Pickett

SPC Jason Rasco, 502nd Engineer Co., and PFC Randall Jennings, A Co., 16th Signal Battalion, clean the steps to the dining facility as part of their KP duties.



PFC Latreesha White, with HHC, 4th Infantry Division, prepares corn for the evening meal at Forward Operating Base Ironhorse.

# Task Force News



Photo by CPL Gabe Nix  
PFC Shawn Wheatly, Alpha Company, 1-10 Cavalry, plays ping-pong during his stay at the R & R facility in Tikrit, Iraq.



Photo by SSG Craig Pickett  
From left: PFC Juan Martinez, 1404th Trans. Co., SPC Kristi Adamski, 475th QM Co., and PFC Rickie Timmerman, 1404th Trans. Co., enjoy a game of Monopoly at Soldiers' Inn.

By CPL Gabe Nix

TIKRIT, Iraq -- A soldier bobs his head to the beat of music from a boom box as he plays cards. Steel on steel clangs as horseshoes are tossed into a pit. A volleyball is served and flies over a net blown by a breeze off the nearby lake. These are a few of the relaxing scenes found at Soldiers' Inn.

Soldiers' Inn is located on Forward Operating Base Ironhorse in Tikrit, Iraq. It occupies one of Saddam Hussein's former palaces on a complex filled with palaces. Soldiers' Inn sits high on a cliff overlooking the Tigris River. A lake shoulders the building and a variety of fruit and fig trees and flowers surround it. The palace has marble floors and pillars, inlaid wooden doors and chandeliers light its many rooms and hallways. Rooms that once served as meeting halls or banquet rooms now offer a place for soldiers to rest and recuperate.

Soldiers from B Company, 223<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Battalion were some of the first "guests" at the inn.

"I've been able to relieve a lot of stress and tension," says SSG Keith Spratlin, non-commissioned officer in charge of the 223<sup>rd</sup>. "We have not had a day off since we've been here."

Soldiers receive four days and three nights off as they rotate through the Soldiers' Inn for an R and R tour. For many, it's the first time they've slept on a cot or enjoyed air conditioning or been able to escape the talc-like sand that's everywhere.

"The best part is not having anyone tell you what to do," says Spratlin. "If I want, I can sleep in late or even stay up late."

Soldiers can also take part in several different activities. The Soldiers' Inn offers a movie theatre, reading room, video games, pool tables, weight room, and a swimming pool. Outdoor recreation includes fishing, biking, horseshoes, and basketball.

"Fishing is the most popular activity so far," according to SPC Jason Crippen, 418<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs out of Belton, Mo. Crippen issues recreational equipment at Soldiers' Inn. "I think it makes people feel like they are fishing at their favorite spot back home," Crippen said.

Soldiers also enjoy being able to leisurely stroll around the palatial grounds. "I enjoy being able to walk around, take pictures, and not having to be on duty," says Spratlin.

The Soldiers' Inn gives soldiers a much-needed break and a chance to re-charge before getting back to the work of helping rebuild Iraq.

# Unit Spot Light



SPC Angela Fornah and SPC Monique Wood enjoy a lively conversation as they work their way through a mound of dirty laundry; pinning each piece for identification.



SPC Tyrone Gross pins clothes on his 33rd birthday in the sweltering heat of Iraq.

*Story and Photos by SSG Craig Pickett*

BAQUBAH, Iraq—Life for soldiers in war-torn Iraq is hard. Within minutes of starting the day, their clothes are soaked with sweat and covered in dirt. Some stay that way for days, but that's about to change.

Members of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Quartermaster Company, from Philadelphia, Pa., are combating the dirt and sweat stained clothes with 10,000 gallons of water a day. The soldiers are operating a laundry and bath facility for members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

The twenty laundry and bath specialists have set up camp at Ba'Qubah Airfield. Their living quarters are 50 feet from the showers they operate.

"We provide showers 20 hours a day," said SGT DaRon Wallace, 22, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the day shift. "The remaining four hours of the day are used for maintenance and cleaning of the showers," he said.

About 500 dirty soldiers visit the showers on any given day. One tent is dedicated for females and one is for males. Fifty feet beyond those tents is the laundry facility. Music filters out of the rolled up sides of the dust-covered tent. Inside, five soldiers pin clothes to be washed.

SPC Tyrone Gross, 33, explained the laundry pinning process. "Each person is given a pin set, such as E20. We then pin each article of clothing," he said. Pins are placed in inconspicuous places "just in case we make a hole," added Gross.

After the clothes are washed and dried, they are sorted by pin number, folded and placed in the soldier's laundry bag. The goal is for a three day turn around. To do this, Wallace said they have a quota of about 250 bags per day.

"That's a helluva lot of work," said SPC Pete Tekula, 23. "Many say we are the hardest working people on camp." One advantage of the job, said Tekula, is being able to take showers anytime and doing your own laundry.

Saving money is another advantage for the filmmaking student who was pulled out of college in his last semester. "I've got a lot of bills paid," he said. "Hopefully, I'll go home and have a lot of money saved."

The advantages are weighed heavily against the heat, which is a constant factor. But members of the 442<sup>nd</sup> continue day and night to ensure their mission is a success.

Proof of their success is in soldiers' comments. "We have a lot of people coming up to us and thanking us," said Tekula. "It's a big morale booster."

What he and the others may or may not realize is they are the ones providing the morale booster to thousands of soldiers who just want to be clean, if only for a moment.

*This letter was sent to FRGs at Fort Hood*



To The Ironhorse Family,

Your husbands and wives are working tirelessly every day to improve the lives of Iraqi citizens and set the conditions that will allow us, and other U.S. forces to re-deploy. They have fought fiercely against the remaining Saddam loyalists, while at the same time compassionately helping the Iraqi people move to a free, democratic society.

I am impressed daily by the magnificent performance and attitude of every Ironhorse soldier. I know some of our soldiers and their families have already sacrificed much and we will never forget them. As the CENTCOM Commander, General Abizaid said recently while visiting Task Force Ironhorse, our mission is critical to fighting the global war on terrorism and we must defeat terrorists here so that we don't have to defeat them in the U.S. We will complete our mission no matter how long it takes.

Undoing 35 years of repression and tyranny will not be quick or easy; our soldiers have performed brilliantly and will continue to do so. The United States will leave Iraq only after the mission is complete and free Iraqi people enjoy a safe, secure, healthy, and prosperous society.

As we said prior to deployment, we are committed to the mission the President has given us, and we are proud to see this task through to completion. It is the right thing to do. In support of this long term effort, I believe the division will be here about a year; if conditions are met that allow withdrawal of forces sooner it may not be that long, but we need to plan for a year.

Our soldiers are professionals; they will persevere and complete this continuing mission with the same motivation and dedication they have displayed from the beginning of this operation. Our soldiers are focused on the mission at hand.

I have personally been proud of the unwavering support we have received from all the friends and family members of Task Force Ironhorse. You are true heroes and your continuing support allows us to maintain this focus. The exceptional way that the Ironhorse family has rallied from the moment we deployed is as important to the division's success as the combat performance of our units.

Our soldiers will not let up the relentless pressure on the enemy; we need the same level of effort from the Ironhorse Family. The challenges of combat will continue; the challenges at home caused by separation and anxiety will endure as well.

Through your continuing support we will complete the mission and return to celebrate our success in Iraq, as well as the success of family members who sacrificed daily while their loved ones deployed. We all look forward to being reunited with our families again. Your mission is difficult and I greatly appreciate all you do for your soldiers and for each other.

Thank you all for your kindness, prayers and sacrifices, while you continue to support us. God bless all the Ironhorse families, and God bless our soldiers. We will get through this together showing everyone what I already know. We have the best soldiers and families in the Army.

"Steadfast and loyal"  
Ray Odierno

# Local Happenings

## **You are Newsworthy! Hometown News Release Program**

Hometown news releases are a great way to let the folks back home know what is going on with their families and friends in the service.

The mission of the Hometown News Release Program is to allow each service member and Department of Defense civilian every opportunity to inform their family and friends back home through local media about their significant achievements while serving during Operation Iraqi Freedom. In other words, it's the military's way of letting America know the great job our task force accomplishes every day.

Unit commanders and senior noncommissioned officers are the largest influence in the success - or failure - of this program. Encouraging soldiers to participate in this voluntary program is the key to a successful unit HTNR program.

Stop by PAO and fill out a DD Form 2266 today!

### **Package Mailing Hours 449<sup>th</sup> Mail Room**

Monday-Friday, Noon-6:00 p.m.  
Weekends- Noon-3:00 p.m.

Located next to the HHC, 4<sup>th</sup> ID warehouse

### **Combat Stress Team Now available at FOB Ironhorse**

Located at the Aid Station

**Briefings**

**Critical Events Debriefings**

**Leadership Consultations**

**Stress Management**

**Support to Soldiers**

**Call 534-0161**

### **Religious Services Sunday**

Protestant- 9:30 a.m.

LDS- Noon - DFAC

Gospel- 11:00 a.m.

Catholic- 1:00 p.m.

#### **Friday**

Jewish- 7:30 p.m.

Muslim 12:25 p.m.

#### **Wednesday**

Prayer & Praise

6:30 p.m.

Bible Study

7:00 p.m.



### **4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Band Performances**

Mon.- Jazz 5:45-6:30 p.m.

Wed.- Brass Quintet  
6-7 p.m.

Fri.- Variety 6:30-7:45 p.m.  
at Soldiers' Inn

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# News Briefs

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Iraqis said on Saturday they were grateful to the United States for ridding them of Saddam Hussein's dreaded sons but now wanted their occupiers to provide the power, water and security they really crave.

**NARUSE, Japan** — Three powerful earthquakes knocked out power grids, collapsed buildings and set off mudslides across northern Japan on Saturday. At least 268 people were hurt — suffering mostly minor injuries — and several hundred people were evacuated.

**WEST GLACIER, Mont.** — At least six houses burned in a blaze that blew up along the western edge of Glacier National Park, a crown jewel of the park system from which thousands of people have been evacuated because of wildfires.

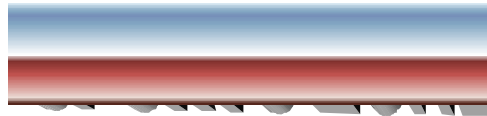
**WASHINGTON** — President Bush ordered an unspecified number of U.S. forces Friday to be positioned off the coast of war-torn Liberia to assist West African peacekeepers after artillery shells crashed into the U.S. Embassy compound in Monrovia and refugee-crowded neighborhoods around it, killing more than two dozen civilians. The Liberian rebels declared another cease-fire shortly after the announcement.

**HAVANA**, — Cuba's revolution turns 50 Saturday with a leader just as defiant today as when he started half a century ago. Fidel Castro will lead the celebration by returning to the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba where he launched his armed struggle in 1953. In fact he will be speaking not far from the courtroom where he went on trial for his life after being captured during his first armed attack against the Batista dictatorship.

**WASHINGTON** — Concerned about the loss of factory jobs and with an eye on next year's election, some congressional Republicans are pushing protectionist and pro-manufacturing measures — which may provide cover for incumbents running for re-election. Republicans have offered a range of measures, from beefing up "buy American" provisions in defense contracting to tax breaks for manufacturing firms.

**TOKYO** — Japanese lawmakers voted early Saturday to send forces to Iraq to help with reconstruction, despite delaying tactics by the opposition that deteriorated into a wild shoving match.

**WASHINGTON** — President Bush is contemplating major changes in the U.S. reconstruction of Iraq for the second time in three months, with the possible addition of one or more prominent figures to work alongside the U.S. administrator in a stepped-up effort to solicit international assistance, administration officials said yesterday.



## BASEBALL--

### Saturday American League games

Boston 5, NY Yankees 4  
Oakland 8, Anaheim 1  
Seattle 4, Texas 0  
Baltimore 7, Toronto 2  
Tampa Bay 10, Chi White Sox 6  
Cleveland 9, Minnesota 2  
Detroit 5, Kansas City 1

### Saturday's National League games

Houston 3, Chi Cubs 1  
St Louis 13, Pittsburgh 8  
Arizona 1, Los Angeles 0  
Florida 10, Philadelphia 5  
Atlanta 15, Montreal 4  
Cincinnati 8, NY Mets 3  
Colorado 13, Milwaukee 8

**AUTO RACING**— Ryan Newman left no doubt about who has the car to catch at this weekend's Penn 500 at the Pocono Raceway when he backed up the fastest practice speed with his fifth pole of the season in qualifying Friday.

## FOOTBALL —

The NFL served notice Friday that it is taking its commitment to diversity seriously, fining Detroit Lions president Matt Millen \$200,000 for not interviewing any minority candidates before hiring coach Steve Mariucci. Commissioner Paul Tagliabue sent a letter to Millen informing him of the fine, the first levied under the league's diversity program.

**GOLF** — Suzy Whaley's ever-present smile faded just slightly as she finished the second round at the Greater Hartford Open. Not because she was disappointed in her score, but because she knew her whirlwind week on the PGA Tour was over.

**HOCKEY** — Police completed their investigation of Dominik Hasek and say charges should be brought against the NHL star for hurting a player during an inline hockey game.

**CYCLING**—U.S. cycling star Lance Armstrong set off for the last leg of the Tour de France on Sunday, virtually assured of a record-tying fifth straight win and a place alongside the greatest cyclists his sport has ever seen.

**SOCCER**—Sharar Haydar was at home in London when one of his brothers in Baghdad notified him by text message. "Congratulations, Uday is dead." Haydar, a former Iraqi national soccer team member, was among the first Iraqi athletes to alert the Western world to the horrors of Uday Hussein that nation's former Olympic and soccer chief. Unlike other exiled athletes who were overcome with fear, he had risked the safety of his family by detailing the torture of athletes, including himself. When International Olympic Committee officials came to speak with him in February, he berated them for a half hour for not taking action sooner, for looking the other way all these years while athletes got their feet caned for nothing more than making a bad pass. He calmed down. The IOC people got to ask their questions. They went home -- and dissolved the Iraqi National Olympic Committee. It was a first in Olympic history.